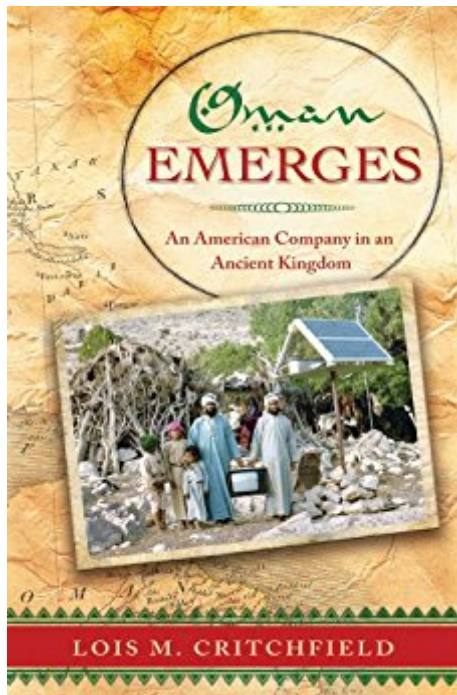




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# Oman Emerges: An American Company In An Ancient Kingdom



## Synopsis

When Sultan Qaboos bin Said deposed his father in 1970, he inherited a neglected country with a modest oil income, but virtually no one qualified to advocate for his interests to the executives of Shell Oil until he found James Critchfield. A decorated combat officer in World War II, Critchfield joined the CIA in 1948 and retired 26 years later as the first man to hold the position of national intelligence officer for energy. He was a specialist in the geopolitics of energy who was eminently suited to begin his third career. Originally contracted to advise the Sultanate on oil policy, Critchfield's company Tetra Tech International gradually expanded its role to include the development of the nation's water and maritime resources as well as major infrastructure projects in the vital Musandam Peninsula and the Buraimi oasis. Lois Critchfield's history of Tetra Tech is a behind-the-scenes view of just exactly how such development programs are conceived and implemented on a national scale. She details the technical, financial and political considerations involved in these projects and reflects upon their implications thirty-five years later. *Oman Emerges* is a case study in international commerce and industry that is most valuable for its insight into the age-old conflict between corporate and national interests.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This interesting account of the effort by the widow of a key player in the introduction of modern facilities and the development of communications: on the ground by road-building and improvement, and by a vast increase in the installation of radio and telephone nets, all made possible by funds from royalties on production of oil. These activities and many others, including geological studies of water resources, improvement in sewage disposal, installation of new fishery ports, and improvements in the laws governing foreign investment were guided by a company headed by the husband of the writer who kept records of his involvement. He was fortunate in being a friend of Sultan Qaboos so was able to have his recommendations acted upon. The story is well told in chapters devoted to one of the many activities and keyed to time and world events. All of the modernization directed by well-qualified men of the Tetra Tech organization began in 1975. There is a bibliography and an index along with photos and maps.

This book has all the elements of a good yarn: a brilliant former spymaster, a proudly sensitive young sultan, an ancient desert kingdom, a smattering of palace intrigue, and a cast of international characters both admirable and otherwise. It is an unlikely page turner, and yet Lois Critchfield has organized a daunting amount of technical material with such clarity that even the non specialist will find the economic history of Oman in the twentieth century a compelling read. Furthermore, the effect of James Critchfield's intelligence, energy, and high principles on the outcome of this story will ring true with those who knew him.

I find this book an excellent source to understanding Tetra Tech's role in Oman's development and establishing its importance as a country finding its way from obscurity into the 20th century. Having spent nearly 6 years working with Tetra Tech in Oman during this period I can attest to the complexity of the issues involved and excellent job by Louis Critchfield in sharing never before published information in a comprehensive manner. A must read for anyone interested in one of the world's most fascinating countries.

I found this very interesting because I knew the players. Excellent value, great price, rapid delivery. Who could ask for more? A perfect choice I could not be more pleased with this purchase

It has been years since I last visited the Sultanate of Oman, and so I welcomed the publication of Lois Critchfield's book, *OMAN EMERGES*. The book is dedicated to her husband, Jim Critchfield, a man with whom I worked, admired greatly, and who played a vital role in Oman as it emerged into the modern world. Drawing on her husband's files and on the memories of others who also played key roles in Oman, Lois does two valuable things in her book: First, she begins with 64 lively pages encapsulating the sultanate from 1790 to 1975, the year Jim Critchfield retired from the CIA to consult to the Omani government with his company, Tetra Tech. The second part of the book is an interesting and scholarly review of the travails of Tetra Tech in Oman, detailing the ups and downs and intrigues of trying to work in an Arab country. The first part of the book is valuable to all who wish to know more about the Middle East; the second part should be required reading for every oilman, engineer, or businessman who has the least hope of succeeding in the Arab world. I met every major actor in Oman during the Tetra Tech years and I can attest to the accuracy of the book, though at times it is perhaps too kind to some of the principals. Nevertheless, I can read between the lines and so will a keen reader. The plentiful photographs and maps describe Oman well, and the group portraits are windows into the natures and characters of the men I knew then. Chet Nagle is the author of *Iran Covenant* — *Iran Covenant*

And so the professor greeted his class in geo-political thought with a quiz on the first day, "Jackson, what country has had a relationship with the USA since the time of George Washington, is situated on one of the five water ways the USA has declared in advance we would fight for and is in a distinct position to convince our most hostile critics that we are well meaning?" Jackson is; of course, stunned that the first words out of his professor's mouth on the first day of class are a quiz for him. Jackson stalls, moans and finally blurts out, "Ohhhh, maaaaaannn." The professor is stunned. "By Jove," he says, "you've got it." Okay, so this little story is a corny and a despicable act by a reviewer of a serious book, but it does make a point which becomes very clear in Mrs. Critchfield's new book about Oman. The Sultanate of Oman, a country which we very rarely ever think about, is critical to the future foreign relations and health of our country. This book is the story of several different things at once: It is a story about Tetra Tech, Inc., an American company that helped the young Sultan Qaboos of Oman bring his country out of the dark ages into a vibrant 20th century. It is an illuminating look at the later life of a fabulous American hero of World War Two and the Cold War, James Critchfield. It is a virtual manual for global business and government how to and not to work with a third world but first world ego country leadership. Finally, it is a wakeup call about the

importance of water vs. oil in the geopolitical world. James Critchfield, a graduate of a North Dakota AG school, entered the US Army Cavalry prior to WW2 as a 2nd Lt. in charge of remounts at a fort that had been in operation since the time of Custer. Later, he became the officer in charge of black recruits out of Fort Riley when the Cavalry segued from horses to motorcycles. These excellent soldiers became a unit of the famed Buffalo Soldiers. He led them to North Africa to fight only to have his men transferred into support units. Critchfield went on to become a war planner for General Lucien Truscott in Naples and led his battalion in the invasion into the South of France, fought his way into Germany where his men liberated concentration camps and became the youngest colonel in the Army. The next phase of his life was a brilliant career in Army intelligence and the CIA during the Cold War. After the CIA, Critchfield joined Tetra Tech in a business venture that resulted in a dramatic boot straps lifting of Oman from a third world to a 20th century country via the oil, gas and water business.. Parts of this story can be found in James Critchfield's "Partners at the Creation" which chronicles the creation of an effective intelligence program versus the USSR utilizing former German Army officers and spies. His life story cries out for a detailed history of his CIA career and his contributions to peace and victory of the Allies. Lois Critchfield, wife of James Critchfield, utilized his files to bring to life the dramatic story of how TTI enables the young Sultan to reverse years of ignorance and poverty by the proper disposition of Oman's resources. While not as action packed as the machine gun history of winning WW2, the struggle with Dutch Shell to conserve and properly shepherd Oman's oil and gas resources is a global business classic. Much of the drama of the book concerns the mysterious characters that surround the young Sultan and the intrigue that transpires with foreign carpet baggers come to seek their fortune both as government representatives and as commercial entrepreneurs. Particularly interesting is the intrigue between US and British parties, sometimes partners, sometimes sworn enemies. All of this plays out with the Strait of Hormuz as a back drop. The US has declared in the past that we will fight to keep the Strait open. Surrounding the Strait are Oman, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Do you suppose there might have been a bit of intrigue as oil was discovered and exploited? James Critchfield spent a decade telling anyone who asked that his enterprise was not a CIA operation. The book makes clear it was not. But this reviewer believes that if it was not a CIA operation, perhaps it should have been. Just as little known Serbia was the flash point that ignited WW1, Oman's Musandam Peninsula is in the crotch of the Strait of Hormuz and could very easily be where the spark that sets off a worldwide conflict flashes. And for Jackson and others studying the Middle East, there are lots of pictures and maps of strategic importance. In my mind, the picture of an Omani family on the front cover is priceless. It shows the family proudly posing by their TV set outside next to a pile of dusty rocks with

a solar panel for power and an antenna pointed at the sky. No oil well is in sight.skfitzp

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